

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

Case No. 23-8301-BER

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

PRESTON FREDAND JOHNSON, Jr.,

Defendant.

/

CRIMINAL COVER SHEET

1. Did this matter originate from a matter pending in the Northern Region of the United States Attorney's Office prior to August 8, 2014 (Mag. Judge Shaniek Maynard)? ___ Yes ☒ No
2. Did this matter originate from a matter pending in the Central Region of the United States Attorney's Office prior to October 3, 2019 (Mag. Judge Jared Strauss)? ___ Yes ☒ No
3. Did this matter involve the participation of or consultation with now Magistrate Judge Eduardo I. Sanchez during his tenure at the U.S. Attorney's Office, which concluded on January 22, 2023? ___ Yes ___ No

Respectfully submitted,

MARKENZY LAPOINTE
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

BY: Rinku Tribuiani

Rinku Tribuiani
ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
Florida Bar No. 0150990
500 South Australian Avenue, Suite 400
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401
Tel: (561) 820-8711
Fax: (561) 820-8777
Email: Rinku.Tribuiani@usdoj.gov

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Southern District of Florida

United States of America

v.

PRESTON FREDAND JOHNSON, Jr.,

Case No. 23-8301-BER

Defendant(s)

FILED BY TM D.C.

Jun 8, 2023

ANGELA E. NOBLE
CLERK U.S. DIST. CT.
S. D. OF FLA. - WPB

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of April 8, 2023 - June 6, 2023 in the county of Palm Beach in the
Southern District of Florida, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

18 U.S.C. §472

18 U.S.C. §473

Offense Description

Uttering counterfeit United States currency

Dealing in counterfeit United States currency

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See Attached Affidavit

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Brendi Braquel Streifthau
 Complainant's signature

SA Brendi Braquel Streifthau, USSS

Printed name and title

Sworn and attested to me by Applicant by Telephone (Facetime) pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 4(d) and 4.1

Date: _____

Bruce E Reinhart Digitally signed by Bruce E Reinhart
 Date: 2023.06.08 11:20:13 -04'00'

Judge's signature

City and state: West Palm Beach, FL

Bruce E. Reinhart, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, Brendi Braquel Streifthau, being first duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

INTRODUCTION AND AGENT BACKGROUND

1. I am a Special Agent with the Department of Homeland Security, United States Secret Service (USSS) and have held this position since March 2020. I am currently assigned to the West Palm Beach Resident Office, and I am a Task Force Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). During my career, I have conducted criminal investigations involving or relating to the financial infrastructure of the United States, to include counterfeit currency/obligations and computer-based crimes, including identity theft, wire fraud, mail fraud, bank fraud, money laundering, and access device fraud.

2. Additionally, I previously worked with the FBI and Miami-Dade County Safe Streets and Violent Gang Task Force. During my time working with the FBI and Miami-Dade County Safe Streets and Violent Gang Task Force, I investigated gang-related murder, assault, weapons possession, organized crime, identity theft, violent crimes in aid of racketeering, and the laundering of monetary instruments associated with these crimes. I have participated in several gang investigations and have conducted physical surveillance, executed several search warrants, and arrested multiple gang members. I have also participated in the debriefing of defendants, informants, and witnesses.

a. I have completed the Criminal Investigator Training Program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia, as well as the Special Agent Training Course at the James J. Rowley Training Center in Laurel, Maryland. I have received training on criminal investigations with emphasis on computer-based

crimes, fraud, electronic- and cyber-crimes, counterfeit currency, and other crimes related to the financial infrastructure.

- b. Prior to my tenure as a Special Agent with the USSS, I was employed with the Smyrna Police Department (Cobb County, GA) as a Sergeant in the Uniform Patrol Division. I was employed with the Smyrna Police Department for seven years and assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division as a Detective and as a Peace Officer in the Uniform Patrol Division. I participated in numerous investigations and executed numerous search warrants and arrest warrants. While employed at the Smyrna Police Department, I received approximately 1,600 hours of Georgia Peace Officer Standards Training that included specialized training in criminal investigations, interviews, and interrogations, ChildFirst (forensic child interviewing), criminal procedure, basic and advanced search warrants and affidavits, and Supervision (levels I, II, and III).
 - c. I hold a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Forensic Behavioral Science and Accounting from Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia.
3. I am authorized to apply for and execute search warrants and arrest warrants for offenses enumerated in Title 18 of the United States Code. I have participated in and directed numerous investigations involving identity theft and various types of fraud committed using stolen identities. As a result of my training and experience, I am familiar with tactics, methods, and techniques used in committing various types of fraud violations of federal law.
 4. Based on information contained in this Affidavit, I respectfully submit there is probable cause for the issuance of a criminal complaint charging Preston Fredand Johnson, Jr.

(“JOHNSON”) with: uttering counterfeit United States currency, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §472, and dealing in counterfeit United States currency, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §473.

5. The facts set forth in this Affidavit are based on my personal knowledge and observations, the knowledge and observations of other law enforcement officials, information and documents received in my official capacity from other sources of information, as well as information gained through my training and experience. The information contained in this Affidavit is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. This Affidavit is submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause and thus does not include each and every fact known to law enforcement about this investigation.

April 8, 2023: Saks Fifth Avenue

6. On or about Tuesday, April 18, 2023, your Affiant was contacted by Boca Raton Police Department Detective K. Alsup, regarding a known subject uttering counterfeit currency at local department stores. The following information is referenced in Boca Raton Police Department report number 23-4916:

- a. On or about Saturday, April 8, 2023, at approximately 1245 hours, a black male subject passed eighteen (18) counterfeit \$100 US bills at Saks Fifth Avenue at Town Center Mall located at 5800 W. Glades Road, Boca Raton, Florida 33431 (within Palm Beach County, Florida). The subject had purchased \$1,814 worth of children’s clothing. The subject was described as a black male, late 50s, 5’11”, 190 pounds, wearing a blue polo-style short-sleeve shirt, dark-colored shorts, a blue ballcap, and wore a dark-colored “Covid-type” face mask. The transaction was recorded on store surveillance.

- b. On or about Saturday, April 8, 2023, at approximately 1500 hours, the same subject returned the merchandise he had fraudulently purchased earlier in Boca Raton for a cash refund at the Saks Fifth Avenue at Dadeland Mall located at 7687 N. Kendall Drive, Miami, FL 33156 (within Miami-Dade County, Florida). The subject provided his driver's license which can be seen on store surveillance. Also, on the return receipt, the following customer name and address was listed: "Preston Johnson, [redacted] NW 194 ST, Miami, FL 33055, Home Phone: (754) 265-[redacted]".
- c. Law enforcement identified the male as Preston Fredand Johnson, Jr. (JOHNSON).

April 28, 2023: Walmart

7. On or about May 2, 2023, your Affiant was made aware of another similar incident involving JOHNSON and another female accomplice, as referenced in Jupiter Police Department report number 23-001779:

- a. On April 28, 2023, at approximately 1854 hours, a black female wearing a pink dress with a design on it, shoulder-length black hair, and appeared to be 40-50 years old, entered Walmart located at 2144 West Indiantown Road, Jupiter, Florida 33458. On April 28, 2023, at approximately 1856 hours, a black male wearing a white t-shirt with blue/white or yellow shorts, and gray sneakers, with a gold watch on his left wrist, and appeared to be 50-60 years old with gray/white hair on his head along with a white goatee, entered the store. The black male purchased items then exited to his vehicle, a blue Jeep Compass bearing California license plate: 8XZK333. The black male then returned inside the store and did the same sequence but purchased different items. The black female selected multiple items and

conducted her transaction at the same register before exiting the store, and both individuals left the property in the blue Jeep Compass. Those three (3) transactions were paid for using counterfeit money. The total amount passed in counterfeit was \$1,220 – twelve (12) counterfeit \$100 US bills and one (1) counterfeit \$20 US bill. The total amount in stolen merchandise including the change due from each transaction was \$1,333.79. The transactions were captured on store surveillance.

- b. A F/NCIC check on the suspect vehicle described above – blue Jeep Compass bearing California license plate: 8XZK333 (VIN: 3C4NJDEB7MT595622) was registered to Enterprise Holdings – a rental vehicle company. The rental company advised that the vehicle was leased to Preston Johnson (B/M, XX/XX/1969, 754-265-[redacted]) with an address of [redacted] NW 24th Street, Lauderhill, Florida, 33313.
- c. Law enforcement has identified the male as Preston Fredand Johnson, Jr. (JOHNSON).
- d. Law enforcement has identified the female as: M.P.S., DOB: XX/XX/1975.

April 29, 2023: Saks Fifth Avenue

8. On or about May 2, 2023, your Affiant was made aware of another similar incident involving JOHNSON and another female accomplice, as referenced by the same Boca Raton Police Department report number as before 23-4916:

- a. On or about April 29, 2023, at approximately 1459 hours, a black female entered Saks Fifth Avenue at Town Center Mall located at 5800 W. Glades Road, Boca Raton, FL, (within Palm Beach County, Florida) and passed ten (10) counterfeit

\$100 bills, having purchased two items of merchandise for \$1,005.80. This transaction was captured on store surveillance.

- b. On or about April 29, 2023, at approximately 1740 hours, the same female returned the merchandise for a cash refund to the Saks Fifth Avenue located at 81 SW 8th Street, Miami, FL 33130 (within Miami-Dade County, Florida). The customer name and address on the return receipt is listed as: Renee Thomas, [redacted] NW 186th Terrace, Carol City, FL 33056, Home Phone: 954-265-[redacted]. This transaction was captured on store surveillance.
- c. Law enforcement has identified the female as: M.P.S., DOB: XX/XX/1975.

June 2, 2023: Macy's

9. On or about Tuesday, June 6, 2023, your Affiant was notified of another incident involving JOHNSON at Town Center Mall in Boca Raton, FL. This incident was an attempt to pass counterfeit bills and was not documented by Boca Raton Police Department.

- a. On or about Friday, June 2, 2023, a male subject identified as JOHNSON attempted to pass counterfeit bills at Macy's at Town Center Mall located at 5800 W. Glades Road, Boca Raton, FL (within Palm Beach County, Florida), but was turned away. This attempted transaction is captured on store surveillance.

Counterfeit Identification

10. To date, your affiant has inspected the counterfeit bills obtained from the transactions at Saks Fifth Avenue (Boca Raton 23-4916) on April 8, 2023, and April 29, 2023, and Walmart (Jupiter 23-001779) on April 28, 2023. All the Federal Reserve notes were positively identified as counterfeit by the lack of security features – no watermark, no security thread, no security fibers, no optically variable ink or thread, blurry microprinting, and textured

paper-stock. It was determined by a further microscopic inspection that the notes appeared to be ink-jet printed due to the irregularly shaped and randomly spaced dots on the paper.

- a. The counterfeit notes from Boca Raton Police Department case 23-4916 have been submitted into the evidence vault at the USSS West Palm Beach Resident Office located at 625 N. Flagler Drive, West Palm Beach, Florida 33401.
- b. All other counterfeit notes collected from various department stores are in the respective police department jurisdiction's evidence unit.

11. At this time, there have been several reports of JOHNSON and M.P.S. attempting to pass counterfeit bills at department stores in Palm Beach County, St. Lucie County, Broward County, and Miami-Dade County. In most of those instances, the store cashier notices that there is an issue with the currency being passed and before security arrives, JOHNSON and M.P.S. obtain the counterfeit bills back and leave the store. If there is an attempt, the stores rarely document the incident to security or police. Law enforcement and loss prevention personnel from various department stores are still attempting to track down and locate those incidents and store surveillance footage. Many of the police departments in conjunction with security at the department store malls have License Plate Readers (LPRs) installed at the entrances/exits of the mall which have captured the vehicle associated with JOHNSON and M.P.S. on multiple occasions.

June 6, 2023: Palm Beach Gardens Police Arrest

12. On June 6, 2023, at approximately 14:03 hours, a Palm Beach Gardens Police Officer conducted a traffic stop of a blue Jeep Compass bearing California license plate 8XZK333. The occupants of the vehicle were identified as: Preston Fredand JOHNSON, Jr. and Miranda Patris SANDERS. During the investigative stop, JOHNSON was in possession

of cocaine, marijuana, and counterfeit US currency. JOHNSON was placed under arrest and transported to Palm Beach Gardens Police Department prior to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Detention Facility. SANDERS was released from the scene, and the vehicle was towed to Kauff's impound lot located at 4701 East Avenue, West Palm Beach, Florida 33407.

- a. Your Affiant responded to Palm Beach Gardens Police Department and conducted a recorded interview with JOHNSON in the holding cell. JOHNSON signed the Miranda Warning form indicating that he understood his rights and agreed to speak. JOHNSON advised that SANDERS is his girlfriend and they reside in Miami Gardens, Florida. JOHNSON indicated that he purchases the counterfeit from an unknown male subject in Miami Gardens, Florida and has bought it on several occasions from the male. JOHNSON stated that he is not employed and does not receive disability pay; he advised that he gets money from begging and borrowing. JOHNSON stated that when he needs counterfeit and sees the unknown male subject at the "corner-store," he typically pays \$50 cash and will receive about fifty (50) \$10 bills. When further questioned regarding larger bills and what he pays for with the counterfeit, JOHNSON refused to answer.

Additional Information

13. Furthermore, JOHNSON has an active warrant out of the Calhoun Police Department (Gordon County, Georgia) from an incident (police report 23-011463) that occurred on January 15, 2023 where JOHNSON entered a Walmart in Calhoun, Georgia and uttered \$800 in counterfeit \$50 bills then later returned the merchandise in Chattanooga, Tennessee. There was a female accomplice, as well, who uttered a counterfeit \$50 bill but was

stopped by the cashier. The female accomplice was able to retrieve the counterfeit bill back and left the store in the same vehicle as JOHNSON. The female was not identified in that incident.

14. Additionally, JOHNSON is currently out on bond for a fraud-related charge in Santa Rosa County, Florida. The hearing has been reset to July 26, 2023.

CONCLUSION

15. Based on the foregoing, I respectfully submit there is probable cause to believe that Preston Fredand JOHNSON, Jr. committed violations of uttering counterfeit United States currency, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §472, and dealing in counterfeit United State currency, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §473.

FURTHER YOUR AFFAINT SAYETH NAUGHT.

Brendi Braquel Streifthau

SPECIAL AGENT BRENDI BRAQUEL STREIFTHAU
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE

Sworn and Attested to me by Applicant by Telephone (Facetime) pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 4(d) and 4.1 this _____ day of June 2023.

**Bruce E
Reinhart**

Digitally signed by
Bruce E Reinhart
Date: 2023.06.08
11:20:46 -04'00'

BRUCE E. REINHART
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

PENALTY SHEET

Defendant's Name: PRESTON FREDAND JOHNSON, JR.

Case No: _____

Count #: 1

Uttering counterfeit United States currency

Title 18, United States Code, Section 472

*** Max. Term of Imprisonment: up to 20 years**

*** Max. Supervised Release: up to 3 years**

*** Max. Fine: up to \$250,000 and a mandatory \$100 special assessment upon conviction**

Count #: 2

Dealing in counterfeit United States currency

Title 18, United States Code, Section 473

*** Max. Term of Imprisonment: up to 20 years**

*** Max. Supervised Release: up to 3 years**

*** Max. Fine: up to \$250,000 and a mandatory \$100 special assessment upon conviction**

***Refers only to possible term of incarceration, supervised release and fines. It does not include restitution, special assessments, parole terms, or forfeitures that may be applicable.**